2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

birth receives a guardian angel, the soul of the deceased after leaving this world starts first to visit all the people and places where it has been when on this earth. This journey, no matter how great the distance may be, must be completed in forty days. If the departed has lived most of his time in his village, and only occasionally has gone to neighboring towns or villages, the journey will be an easy and pleasant one, but if he has traveled great distances the journey will be tiring and rough. It may be that this belief has been responsible for keeping the peasants so firmly attached to their land and village, and preventing them from migrating to new lands. . . .

"The soul has started on its journey, while the body is still in the house, being mourned by the family and the neighbors. The members of the family throw grains of corn or wheat into the coffin. They also believe that there is a great river to be passed and if the deceased has no money he will be unable to cross, and his journey will be impeded. Another peculiar belief is that the neighbors send through him messages to their departed, firmly believing that he will deliver them."

Investigation showed that these statements held true generally of Dragalevtsy but needed to be supplemented. For one thing, the villagers had definite ways of foretelling death. They said, for instance, that there were as many stars in the sky as there were people on earth, and that there was a particular star for each person. When a star fell to the ground, someone was said to have died and his star to have gone out like his soul. If the star merely moved from one place to another, then its particular earthly representative had changed his residence. Many peasants also believed that "stars with tails" (meteors) foretold some great misfortune to be sent by God. Usually they were thought to signify war "because before the Balkan War and the World War there were such." But there were even more specific ways of predicting death in any given locality. When the owls cried at sunset toward a house or when a hen crowed, death was sure to follow soon. Certain dreams indicated the coming of death. Bai Angel, the village registrar, told me that a soldier could be practically certain of death if he dreamed of a snake. He supported this belief with the story of an officer in the first World War who lined up his men before a battle and went down the ranks to shake hands with

2: Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

was directing the group, rather than the hostess, suggested that they take up work once more.

I spent many hours in the fields chatting with these women. There was a hypnotic rhythm of sound and color in their work as the line of black-clad bodies, and white headcloths, swayed forward together through the thin green blades. In the high altitude everything was sharply defined: the red-roofed village two miles away, the puffs of white cloud infinitely high in the blue, the strong harsh peasant voices close by. While the women worked they sang old folk songs about beautiful heroines and the brave Krali Marko, a legendary Balkan hero who carried out prodigious feats against the Turks, or of peasant girls knitting gay stockings for village boys. The songs were usually romantic and often were cheerful in theme; but now and then one was moved by a haunting sadness deeper even than that of the Negro work songs. Hour after hour I used to hear the unhappy music rise in its bizarre cadence; day after day for three weeks the corn was hoed in one field after another. Week after week the sun beat down on Vitosha and the Sofia plain, while summer burned itself away. The corn grew waist high, then shoulder high, and finally yielded the golden ears to the strong brown fists of some boy or girl at the autumn cornhusking *sedenki.*

Early July was the haying season. Each sunrise would find most of the villagers out in the fields. Some of the men with their sharp scythes cut the hay in even swaths, letting it lie as it fell, to dry in the parching sun. Others would load the cured hay onto the wagons fitted out with ladderlike sides. As the wagons rolled through the village streets they were greeted by the little children who had had to stay at home with their aged grandparents or great-grandparents. The haystacks, whether left in the field or dressed near the house, were weighted down by lines to which heavy stones had been attached.

One could not be with the peasants long at haying time, or indeed at any other time, without sensing their feeling of close dependence upon the weather. In fact, I soon found myself sharing this feeling, although I remained somewhat dubious of the infallibility of the signs by which they "read the weather." They believed, for example,

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

787 821 that it would rain if the crows bathed in the river, if the sun set or rose behind a cloud or was surrounded by a circle, or if the oxen dug the earth with their horns in the springtime. When the moon was surrounded by a dark circle, the weather would supposedly change to rain if it was summer and to snow if winter. Rain would also follow if the stars shone brightly, the sky was red in the morning, or the middle part of Vitosha was foggy. But the surest sign of bad weather was the sight of pigs carrying straw to the sty at sunset. Yet good weather alone did not ensure good crops. The human element was of utmost importance.

464 241 Bulgaria had, according to prewar figures, the largest labor supply per decare in Europe, with 5.8 workers available for 100 decares (25 acres) of land. Italy came next with 4.7, then Poland with 4.3, but Great Britain had only 0.7. In spite of such a surplus of labor the people had not begun to cultivate intensively. An increasing number of young people therefore had to seek a living from sources off the farm. Such intensive cultivation, however, would require radical changes in farming practices. Not more than thirty Dragalevtsy families saved liquid fertilizer, although the rest did haul wagonload after wagonload of manure from the stables to the fields late in the winter to be dumped in piles awaiting later spreading. There was very little harrowing, and what was done took place in the spring after the rains.

243. The cornfields were plowed under at once after the harvest and were immediately sown with grain. If the field had produced *smes*, the stubble was plowed under to lie fallow for one or two years. The fallow fields were plowed once in the spring, once in the middle of the summer, and again in the autumn just before the grain was to be sown.

What might be considered a Bulgarian counterpart of our Thanksgiving feast occurred at the time of this fall sowing of grain. Early in the morning the woman arose quietly to bake one large and two small loaves of bread, and to catch a young rooster which she handed over to her husband just before he was ready to start to the field in the oxcart. What followed was the observance of a pagan fertility rite. With the dignity of a priest performing an ancient sacrifice, the

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1

heavens nor the *ale* (dragons) can harm, so may no illness be able to do anything to him over whom this knife is placed. Strengthen it, Moon, make it powerful, bless it, Moon' (three times).[1]

Over and above the ties of natural and marital kin, and of tribe, clan or citizenship, three persons in particular were outstanding in the Southern Slav social code and structure: the guest, the brother by adoption and the *kum*, that is, persons with whom a temporary or permanent alliance was solemnly made.

It is very likely that theophanic associations influence the cult of hospitality, but it is certain that a guest can not only bring good or ill fortune or disease, but that he can also carry them away. Beggars, particularly vagrant beggars, have their use. They receive in many places the clothes of dead people and other tabooed articles. Disease enclosed in various objects is given secretly to them or thrown after them, say in water in their tracks, or swept out of doors as they go. Moreover they can sometimes perform rites for the sick, for instance when it is essential that this or that should be done by someone whom the patient has never seen before. Perhaps this, as much as the notion of charity, accounts for the fact that beggars are given dedicated food. Formerly the presence of strangers, at any rate beggars, was almost an essential feature of the *slava*. When the disease is thrown out with the parting stranger, I do not know whether or not he is supposed afterwards to suffer. Water in which a sick person has been washed is also thrown in the tracks of a neighbour who may be supposed responsible for the evil eye or spell.

The motif is illustrated in the following charm—when washing oneself and an old copper coin in water at the same

[1] M. Milosavljević, *Običaji srpskog naroda iz sreza Homoljskog*, S.E.Z. XIX, pp. 397–401. In Bulgaria the witch (*magionica*) enticed the moon during an eclipse into a sieve, and after holding a conversation with it, allowed it to return to the sky. Her procedure and apparatus were somewhat similar to those given above; cf. D. Marinov, *Živa Starina*, I (1891), p. 52. The belief that witches caused the eclipse of the moon by magic is mentioned in early mediaeval sources.

5: Kemp E-4, 5 (1926-1933)1935
EF6 Serbs EF6
Bulgaria EE1
Slovenes EF7
Croats EF4
Contemporary Macedonians EF8

village. These ceremonies to the best of my knowledge survive in Northern Croatia, the Dalmatian hinterland, Slavonia, Macedonia, in Bulgaria and sporadically in Serbia, and that mainly in pastoral districts. It is now not usual that the fire on these occasions is new fire. Divining is practised; the aim seems to be mainly apotropaeic and often specifically relates to health, or to prevent magic, or the attacks of witches. The ashes of the fires are kept for medicine or to promote the fertility of animals. Not only do these ceremonies change their dates but there is a tendency to amalgamate rites in which fire takes a part. Some authorities are of the opinion that the various fire ceremonials are ultimately of the same origin. Arnaudov distinguished two main types: one that is cathartic, and one that is exorcismal in aim; and among the latter he classed the celebration of the summer solstice, which in his opinion has sometimes been transferred to the spring.[1]

Mannhardt adopted from Kuhn[2] the identity of the need fire with St John's fire and attributed the same motives to the Roman Palilia. Prof. Trojanović, who has recently published a valuable collection of fire ceremonies, seems to follow the same train of thought, and elaborates the theme 'fire circle = sun disc'. He has sought his parallels, however, in Vedic literature, which cannot possibly give us a prototype on account of its date. The most striking similarity in the Balkan and Indian ritual of new fire is the inspection of melted fat, which the domestic sacrificer in India was instructed to gaze upon, and to show to the other members of his family. In one passage the ghee is called 'thunder'—a term that I am unable to explain.[3] These passages, however, refer to sacrifices to Agni, and I am not sure that Trojanović is right in regarding need fires as sacrificial, although sacrifices occur sporadically. The Indian ritual further demands

[1] M. Arnaudov, *Spisanie na Bolg. Akademia na Naukite*, IV, p. 30.
[2] Cf. Kuhn, *Herabkunft des Feuers*, p. 50, and Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*, I (1875–7), pp. 519, etc.
[3] E.g. *Satapatha-Brâhmana*, III, S.B.E. XXVI, pp. 106, 169.